



June 4, 2001

Ms. Kristi LaRoe  
Assistant District Attorney  
Tarrant County  
Justice Center  
401 W. Belknap  
Fort Worth, Texas 76196-0201

OR2001-2290

Dear Ms. LaRoe:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 149803.

The Tarrant County Sheriff's Department (the "department") received a request for two specified offense reports. You claim that the requested information is excepted under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

You claim that the submitted information is excepted under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." This section encompasses information protected by statute. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to conduct that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. However, section 58.007(c) is inapplicable because the incident at issue does not involve a "child" as defined by section 51.02(2) of the Family Code. A "child" is a person who is:

- (A) ten years of age or older and under 17 years of age; or
- (B) seventeen years of age or older and under 18 years of age who is alleged or found to have engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision as a result of acts committed before becoming 17 years of age.

Fam. Code § 51.02(2)(A)-(B). In this instance, the suspect was seventeen years of age when the conduct occurred. Therefore, the department may not withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with 58.007(c) of the Family Code. Because you have raised no other exceptions to disclosure, we conclude that you must release the submitted information.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

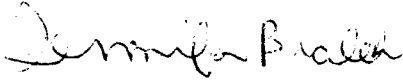
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Bialek".

Jennifer Bialek  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JHB/sdk

Ref: ID# 149803

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Christopher Matthew Peterson  
6628 Cliffside Court  
812 San Antonio Street, Suite 300  
Fort Worth, Texas 76134  
(w/o enclosures)